

Study Report

Proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District

Framingham, Massachusetts



Framingham Historic District Commission

Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

September 2016

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Cover image – the Pike-Haven-Foster House, 1876. Image courtesy of Framingham Public Library archives

Summary Sheet

Contact Information:	Erika Oliver Jerram, Deputy Director Town of Framingham Community and Economic Development Memorial Building, 150 Concord Street, Room B-2 Framingham, MA 01702-8325 (508) 532-5455, ej@framinghamma.gov
Study Committee:	Framingham Historic District Commission (FHDC)
Public Hearing Date:	September 13, 2016
Total Properties:	1
Address:	161 Belknap Road

Conclusion: This Study Report presents rationale for designating the Pike-Haven-Foster House as a single property local historic district. Located at the intersection of Belknap Road and Grove Street, the Pike-Haven-Foster House is one of the earliest buildings in Framingham. A portion of the building is believed to date to 1696 or shortly thereafter, when Jeremiah Pike settled in Framingham. The Pike-Haven-Foster House remained in the family line until 1948. The house has undergone numerous modifications since 1696, but the building today stands as a reminder of Framingham's rural past.

The proposed designation of the Pike-Haven-Foster House at the intersection of Belknap Road and Grove Street as a local historic district would ensure that the architectural features of this historic house are protected from adverse and irreversible alterations by future owners or tenants and that any future redevelopment is consistent with the historic character of the building and surrounding streetscape. The Framingham Historic District Commission held a public hearing on the proposed historic designation on September 13, 2016 for consideration at Fall Special Town Meeting in October, 2016.

Public Hearings and Town Meeting

As required under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40C, a preliminary study report was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Framingham Planning Board in July 2016, for consideration and comment. After the requisite 60-day review period, the Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District designation on September 13, 2016. Seven FHDC members and four members of the public attended the public hearing.

Introduction

The Framingham Historic District Commission (FHDC) first identified the Belknap Road area as a potential historic district in the early 2000s. In the Fall of 2014, the FHDC voted to designate the 10 properties between Edgell Road and Grove Street as a study area and designated the Commission as a study committee as prescribed under M.G.L. Ch. 40C Section 3. In 2015, the Town hired Community Opportunities Group, Inc. (COG), to research the eligibility of the study area and complete the study report with support from Framingham Community and Economic Development Department Deputy Director, Erika Oliver Jerram, and Framingham Historic District Commission members:

- Gerald Couto, Chair
- Sue Bernstein, Vice-Chair
- Julie Ferrari
- Henry Field
- Amy Finstein
- Steve Greeley
- Ted Grenham
- Jim Kubat
- Helen Lemoine
- Calvin Smith

After discussions with the property owners, it was decided to pursue only a single-property district at this time, covering the Pike-Haven-Foster House at 161 Belknap Road.

According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, a local historic district (LHD) is “an area officially designated by a municipality that contains one or more parcels or lots of land, or one or more buildings or structures on one or more parcels or lots of land.” Local historic districts (LHDs) were first established in Massachusetts in 1960; since then, nearly all municipalities in the Commonwealth have used Chapter 40C to create single and multiple property historic districts in their communities to protect areas of special significance to their heritage. To date, Framingham has designated three local historic districts under Chapter 40C, protecting a total of 79 properties.¹ This

¹ *Note:* Article VII, Section 5.7.1 of the Town of Framingham General Bylaws includes all *resources* included in the Town’s historic districts. In several instances, more than one resource is located on a single property.

Study Report proposes to create the Town's fifth local historic district, and third single-property district, the Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District, to protect an additional property. Located on the north side of Framingham Centre, the section of Belknap Road between Edgell Road and Grove Street contains one of the town's best preserved collections of First Period, Federal, Colonial Revival and mid-20th century architecture set within a rural setting of large open lots, stone walls, historic outbuildings, protected conservation land, and scenic vistas. This area is historically significant as a representation of three centuries of development in Framingham from the town's earliest rural beginnings in the late 17th century to its emergence as a suburban enclave in the mid-20th century. Belknap Road follows the original path of Pike Row, one of Framingham's oldest ways, and is associated with two of Framingham's oldest families (Pike and Belknap) and one of its earliest industries (spinning wheels.) The area also holds Revolutionary War significance for its association with the Henry Knox "Cannon Train", portions of which were sheltered overnight at two houses on Belknap Road.

Framingham is a community rich in history. Its built environment includes a diverse collection of historic buildings, objects, structures, landscapes, and burial grounds that provide a visual connection with this past. These resources, which are located throughout the community, represent three centuries of development from the Town's earliest beginnings as an 18th century agricultural community to its more recent history as a 20th century suburban and industrial center. The Town values its heritage and has adopted many of the preservation tools available to protect its cultural assets. In addition to documenting historic resources on inventory forms, the Town has restored many of its historic civic buildings, which continue to serve as beloved community landmarks. In addition, the Town has established both an Historical Commission (1969) and Historic District Commission (1978), nominated 129 properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and adopted a Demolition Delay Bylaw (1991). The Town is now proposing to designate the Pike-Haven-Foster House as a local historic district.

Background to the Current Proposal

The Town of Framingham approved its first local historic district in 1978 when it designated 28 commercial, institutional, and private residential buildings surrounding the Framingham Centre Common as a local historic district. The Framingham Centre Common Historic District represents Framingham's finest collection of 18th and 19th century architecture set within a nearly intact historical setting around the town's original common. The district includes a diverse range of building types and styles and is a significant example of early New England town planning around a central common area. In addition to the Common and its furnishings, the district includes private homes, churches, monuments and several of Framingham's most iconic civic landmarks, the Village Hall (1834), Framingham Academy (1837), and the Edgell Memorial Library (1872).

In 1994, Town Meeting approved the designation of a second local historic district, the Jonathan Maynard Historic District, to protect 32 historic buildings along Pleasant Street, just outside the historic Centre Common. Two years later, Town Meeting approved the expansion of both the Framingham Centre Common Historic District (two additional properties) and the Jonathan Maynard Historic District (six additional properties). In 2008, Town Meeting approved the Town's third local historic district, the Sarah Clayes Historic District to protect one property with regional historic significance. In 2015, Town Meeting approved an expansion of the Framingham Centre Common Historic District to include an additional eight properties.

The proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District, which is located in Framingham Centre to the north of the Centre Common and Edgell Grove Cemetery, provides a rare glimpse into Framingham's rural past. This section of Belknap Road still follows a portion of the original path of Pike Row (established ca. 1700), one Framingham's earliest ways. Over the past three centuries, thoughtful development on this section of Belknap Road has resulted in one of the town's most scenic streetscapes of well-preserved 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century homes set within a rural landscape of stone walls, historic outbuildings, and conservation land. However, Framingham's continued development pressures, particularly in residential areas with large lots, could have significant negative impacts on this historic streetscape. Protecting the Pike-Haven-Foster House through the regulatory oversight and guidance of local historic district designation would ensure that the special architectural features of this early building are preserved.

Local Historic Districts and the Historic Districts Act

The first local historic districts in the United States were designated in Charleston, South Carolina (1931) and New Orleans, Louisiana (1937). In Massachusetts, two local historic districts (Beacon Hill, Boston in 1955 and Nantucket in 1956) were established under special acts of the legislature. In 1960, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts adopted the Historic Districts Act (Chapter 40C of the General Laws) to allow communities to protect areas that were of special significance to their heritage. Under this act, nearly all of the Commonwealth's cities and towns have established local historic districts and many, like Framingham, have more than one district.

Local Historic Districts have three main purposes:

- To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant to the history of the Commonwealth's cities and towns;
- To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and
- To encourage compatibility with existing buildings when new buildings are planned in the districts.

The Framingham Historic District Commission (FHDC) oversees the Town's local historic districts and works with property owners to preserve the architectural integrity of their historic buildings. Governed by M.G.L. Ch. 40C and Article VII, Section 5 of the Town of Framingham General Bylaws, the FHDC reviews the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes to designated properties, except for changes not subject to public view, in-kind repairs, and changes specifically exempted from review:

- Temporary structures erected for a period of ninety days or less;
- Two dimensional signs of four (4) square feet or less;
- Terraces, walks, driveways, and sidewalks at grade level;
- Storm doors and windows, screens, gutters, antennae, and window air conditioners; and
- Paint color and color of roof materials.

Historic District Commissions do not prevent changes from occurring within a local historic district, nor do they seek to prevent new construction. Their purpose is to allow for the thoughtful consideration of change and to ensure that changes and additions are harmonious with the architectural integrity of the historic buildings. HDCs also seek to prevent the introduction of incongruous elements that might distract from the district's overall aesthetic and historic character. When properly established and administered, a local historic district is not unduly burdensome to property owners and, indeed, can enhance property values by mutually assuring similar care will be taken in the review of alterations to all properties in the district.

Local Historic Districts vs. National Register Districts

While there is often confusion regarding local historic district designation versus National Register listing, the difference between these two historic preservation tools is significant. While listing in the National Register of Historic Places indicates historical importance, it is primarily an honorary recognition that provides little protection from incongruous changes or demolition of significant structures. In contrast, local historic district designation is a locally approved regulatory tool that allows for oversight of proposed alterations to historic buildings and their settings to guide changes in a manner that respects both the architectural fabric of the subject property and the overall historic character of the district. Local historic district designation offers the strongest form of protection for a community's historic buildings and streetscapes.

Methodology Statement

The Town of Framingham has an existing Historic District Bylaw under Article VII Section 5 of the Town's General Bylaws and has designated three local historic districts. The Framingham Historic District Commission (FHDC) is responsible for administering the historic districts and overseeing the creation of any new districts in the town. The Town's Deputy Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development, Erika Oliver Jerram, and Historic Preservation Planner Jennifer Doherty serve as staff support for the FHDC for the proposed Pike-Haven-Foster Historic District.

After establishing itself as the Local Historic District Study Committee in 2014, the Framingham Historic District Commission hired Community Opportunities Group, Inc. (COG) to research the significance of Pike Row and its buildings and complete the study report for the local historic district designation. Preliminary research for this report derives from Doug Becker's draft report "Proposal to designate Pike Row: A Framingham Historic District", historic resource inventory forms prepared by the Framingham Planning Department and consultant Kathleen Kelly Broomer, and primary source research conducted by COG.

Additional major sources of primary materials were provided by the Framingham Public Library and Framingham Historical Society. These resources included copies of Framingham atlases and maps, the contents of vertical files, and numerous published Framingham histories. Several websites also provided historic images of Pike Row, including the Framingham History Center, Framingham.com and the Library of Congress (postcards and photographs), the Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, Ward Maps, Historic Map Works, and Maps of Antiquities (maps and atlases).

As required by M.G.L. Chapter 40C, the FHDC submitted this Preliminary Study Report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and the Framingham Planning Board in July, 2016 for their consideration. Following receipt of comment from the MHC and the Planning Board, the FHDC held a public hearing on September 13, 2016. Based on comments received during the hearing, the FHDC revised and completed the Final Study Report for the Pike Row Historic District for consideration at Framingham Town Meeting. It is anticipated that the proposed designation will be considered at Fall Special Town Meeting in October, 2016.

Significance Statement

The proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District, located at the intersection of Belknap Road and Grove Street, would protect one of the oldest buildings in Framingham, significant for its owner's contributions to Framingham's history and as an example of early, rural Framingham architecture. This section of Belknap Road follows a portion of the original path of Pike Row, one of Framingham's oldest ways (ca. 1700). Pike Row is also significant for its association with two of Framingham's oldest families (Pike and Belknap) and its association with one of the earliest industries in Framingham (spinning wheels.) The proposed district also holds Revolutionary War significance for its association with the Henry Knox "Cannon Train", portions of which were sheltered overnight at two houses on Belknap Road, including the Pike-Haven-Foster House, on its route to General Washington in Cambridge. Designation as a local historic district would preserve a significant chapter in Framingham's history and protect the Pike-Haven-Foster House from irreversible changes by future owners or tenants.

Historical Significance

The area now known as the Town of Framingham was first settled in 1647 by John Stone, an English settler from Sudbury, who built a house and corn mill in what is now Saxonville. Other settlers soon followed Stone to the "wilderness" where they leased farmland from the 15,000 acres given in land grants to Thomas Danforth between 1660 and 1662. First known as Danforth's Farms, the area was renamed Framingham Plantation in 1670 after Danforth's English birthplace of Framlingham, England. The area's natural features - rivers, ponds, hills and meadows - continued to attract new settlers and by 1700, when the Town of Framingham was incorporated, about 70 families and 350 residents lived and farmed in the area.

Among those attracted to Framingham was Jeremiah Pike, who together with his wife Rachel and children, moved from Reading to Framingham Plantation in 1696. Pike leased farmland north of the Town Centre from Joseph Buckminster, who served as Danforth's local landlord. Pike built a house (161 Belknap Road) on the land in ca. 1697 and several years later, constructed a second house for his son Michael about a mile away to the west. The path connecting the two houses became known as "Pike Row." In 1711 when Jeremiah died, his son Jeremiah Jr. inherited his father's house. In ca. 1733, Jeremiah Jr. constructed a new house (37 Belknap Road) approximately one-half mile east on Pike Row for his son Aaron and wife Comfort (Pike).

For a century, three generations of the Pike family manufactured spinning wheels on Pike Row. Jeremiah Pike Sr. began the business soon after arriving in Framingham in 1696. He produced the wheels in a small shop on his land (now 37 Belknap Road), where he employed five to six men in the operation. The business was very successful and Pike became active in town politics, participating in Town Meeting before being elected to the Town's first Board of Selectmen. When Jeremiah died in 1711, he left his house and spinning wheel business to his son, Jeremiah Jr., who was also active in Town politics, serving as treasurer and selectmen. Upon Jeremiah Jr.'s death in 1746, his son Moses took over the business. Moses took on an apprentice, Gideon Haven, who later married Moses' daughter Comfort in 1757 and inherited the family home. During the succession of ownership, the house underwent a series of expansions, growing from a two room, single-story dwelling to the impressive two-and-one-half story gambrel roof house seen today. A marker erected in 1930 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission at the corner of Belknap Road and Grove Street reads "Pike-Haven Homestead: Built in 1693 by Jeremiah Pike. He and his descendants were town and militia officers, yeomen and makers of spinning wheels, in the colonial period. This house has been occupied by the same family for eight generations." The street was renamed Belknap Road in the Colonial Period.

In 1775, two houses on Pike Row sheltered artillery pieces from Henry Knox's "cannon train" on its route from Lake Champlain to General Washington in Cambridge. Knox considered Pike Row an ideal location to conceal the cannon train away from the more frequently travelled Boston Post Road. Pieces were sheltered overnight at the home of Colonel Simeon Edgell (37 Belknap Road), one of Framingham's two militia captains, and at the home of Edgell's brother-in-law Gideon Haven (161 Belknap Road.) A marker erected in 1927 on the Centre Common commemorates Framingham's role in the General Henry Knox Trail. The marker reads "Through this place passed General Henry Knox in the winter of 1775 – 1776 to deliver to General George Washington at Cambridge the train of artillery from Fort Ticonderoga used to force the British Army to evacuate Boston."

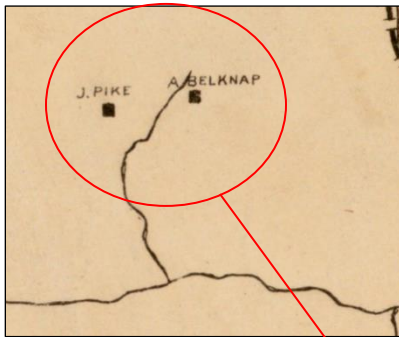
In 1852, Grove Street was extended through open farmland on the south side of Belknap Road to provide access to the Centre and in 1872, the Framingham and Lowell Railroad laid its tracks across Belknap Road to the east of the Elisha Belknap House at 147 Belknap Road. Despite these changes, the southern side of Belknap Road remained undeveloped as open farmland until the second quarter of the 20th century.

Justification of Boundaries

The proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District is located at the intersection of Belknap Road and Grove Street, approximately one mile north of Framingham Center Common. The proposed boundaries for this district follow the lot lines around the parcel designated as 161 Belknap Road and correspond with the Town of Framingham Assessor's Parcel Number 067-08-8729-000. The boundaries of the district correspond to those parcel boundaries as given in Middlesex South Registry of Deeds Book 65328, Page 160.

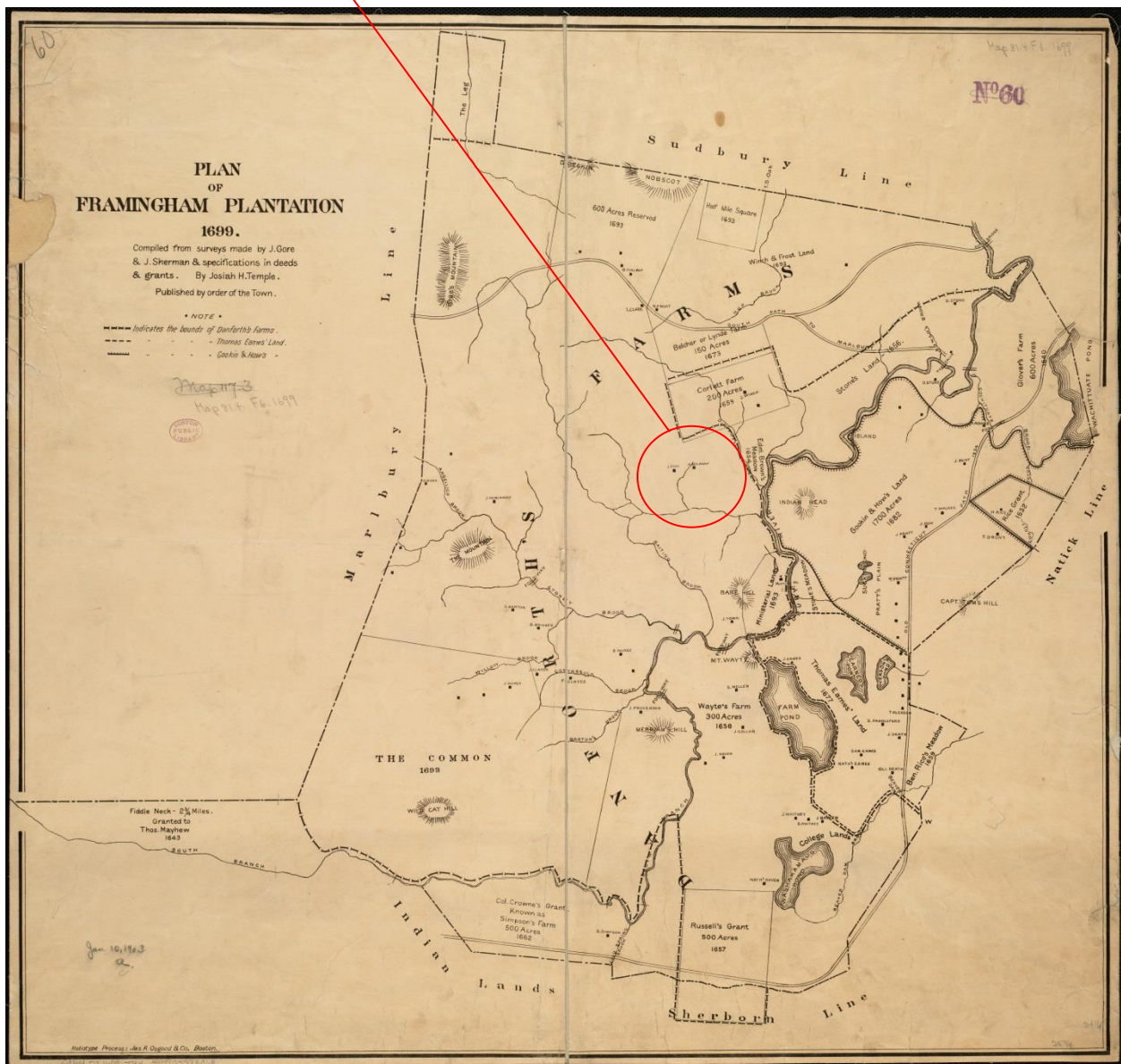
The proposed designation of this property as a local historic district would ensure that this important building is recognized for its historic and architectural significance and is protected from changes by future owners that could irreversibly alter their architectural integrity. Designation will also ensure that any future development on this property is consistent with the historic character of the buildings and their historic settings.

Historic Images and Maps



Houses of Pike and Belknap Families, 1699

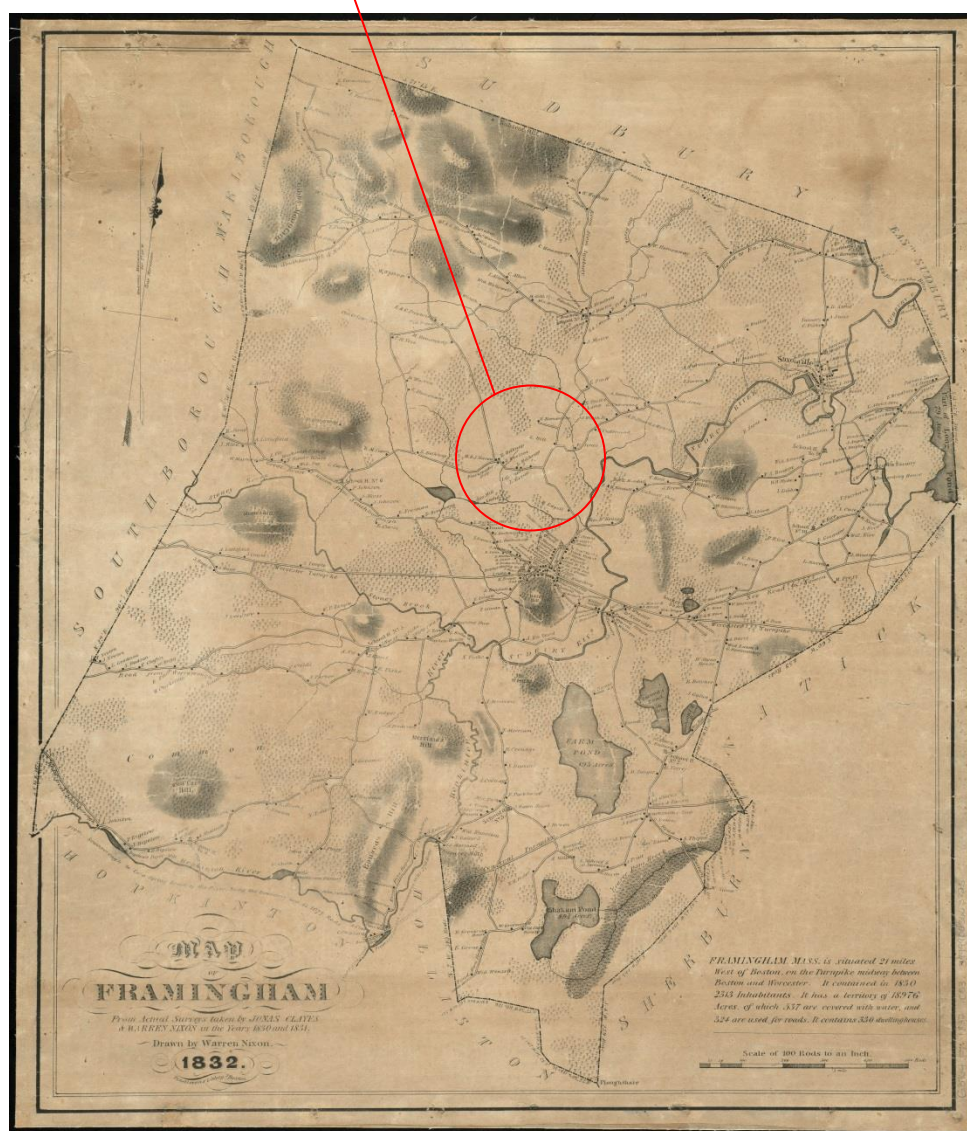
Map of Framingham Plantation, 1699. Image courtesy of Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, <http://bpl.maps.org>





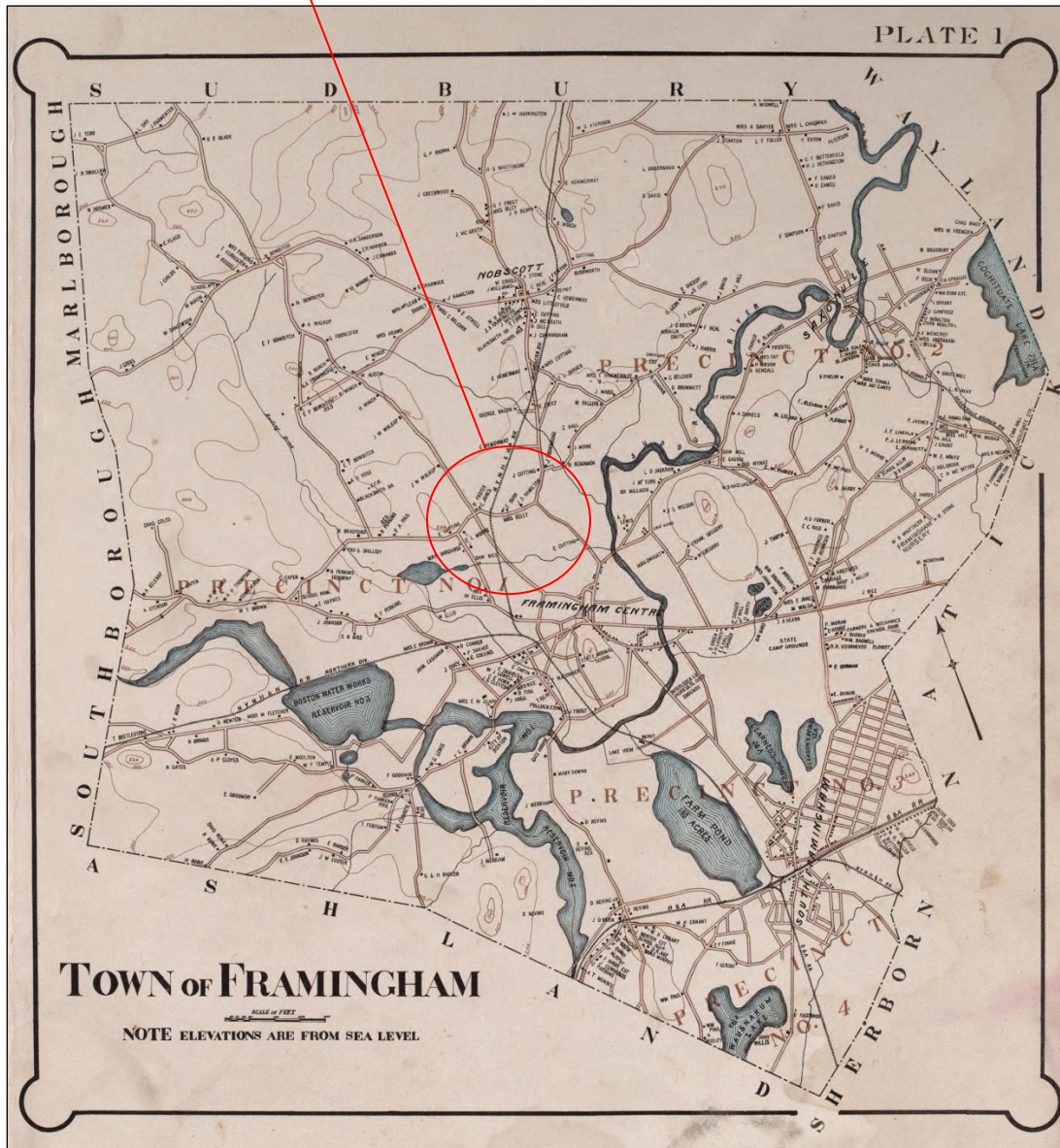
Pike Row, 1832

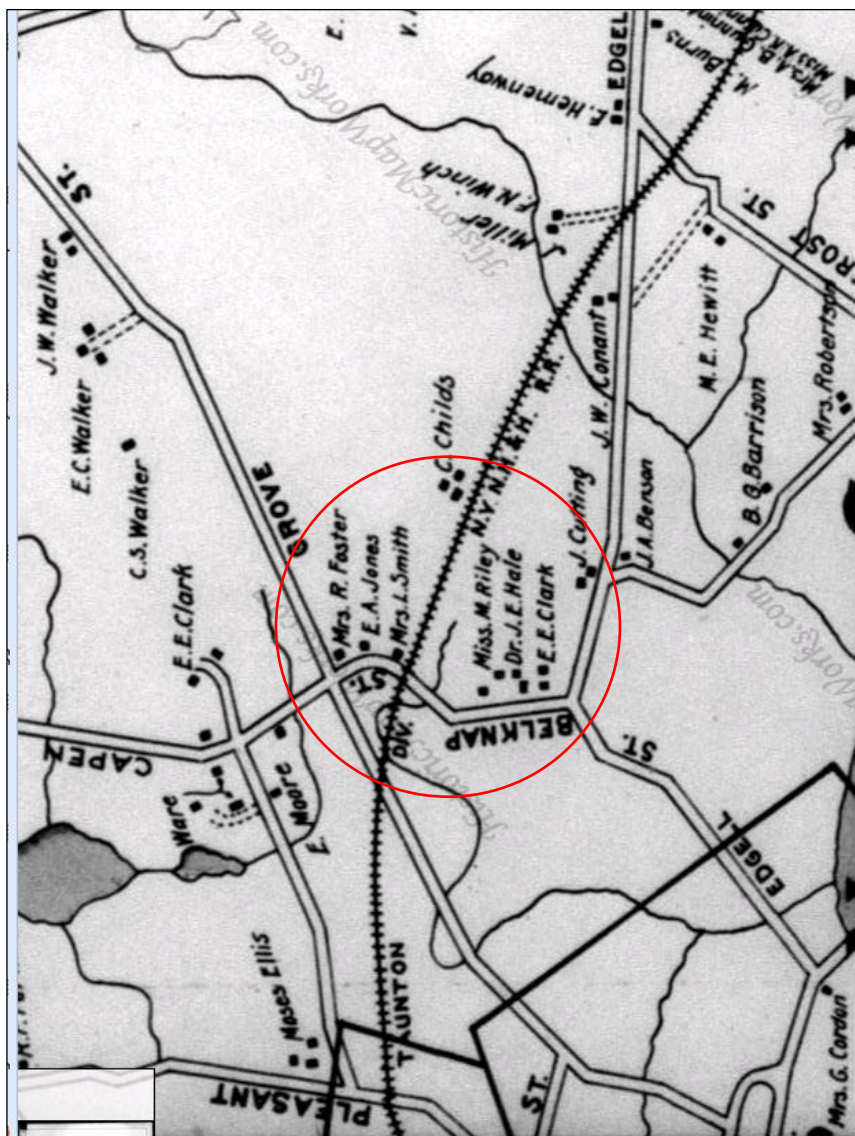
Image courtesy of Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, <http://bpl.maps.org>





Pike Row (Belknap Road), 1895



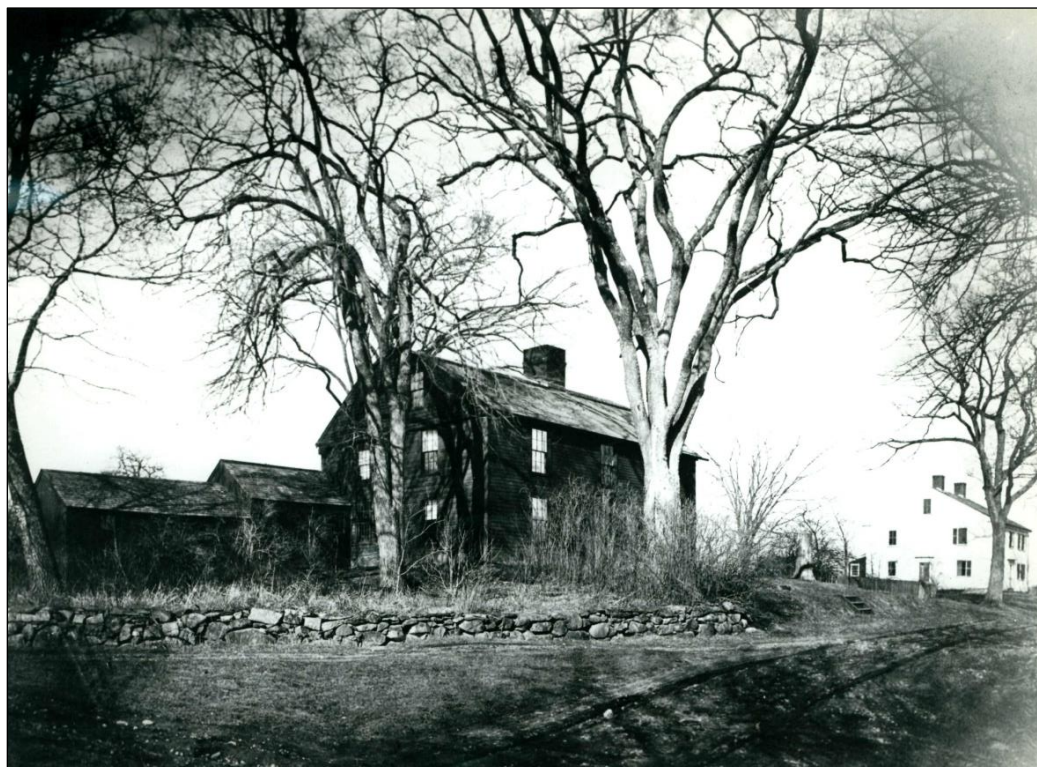


Pike Row (Belknap "Street"), 1908



Regina Foster, in her grandmother's wedding dress. Foster was the last descendant of five generations of Pike Family to live in the Pike-Haven House at 161 Belknap Road.

Image courtesy of Framingham Public Library archives



Pike-Haven House (161 Belknap Road) and Elisha Belknap House (147 Belknap Road) in 1876
Image courtesy of Framingham Public Library archives

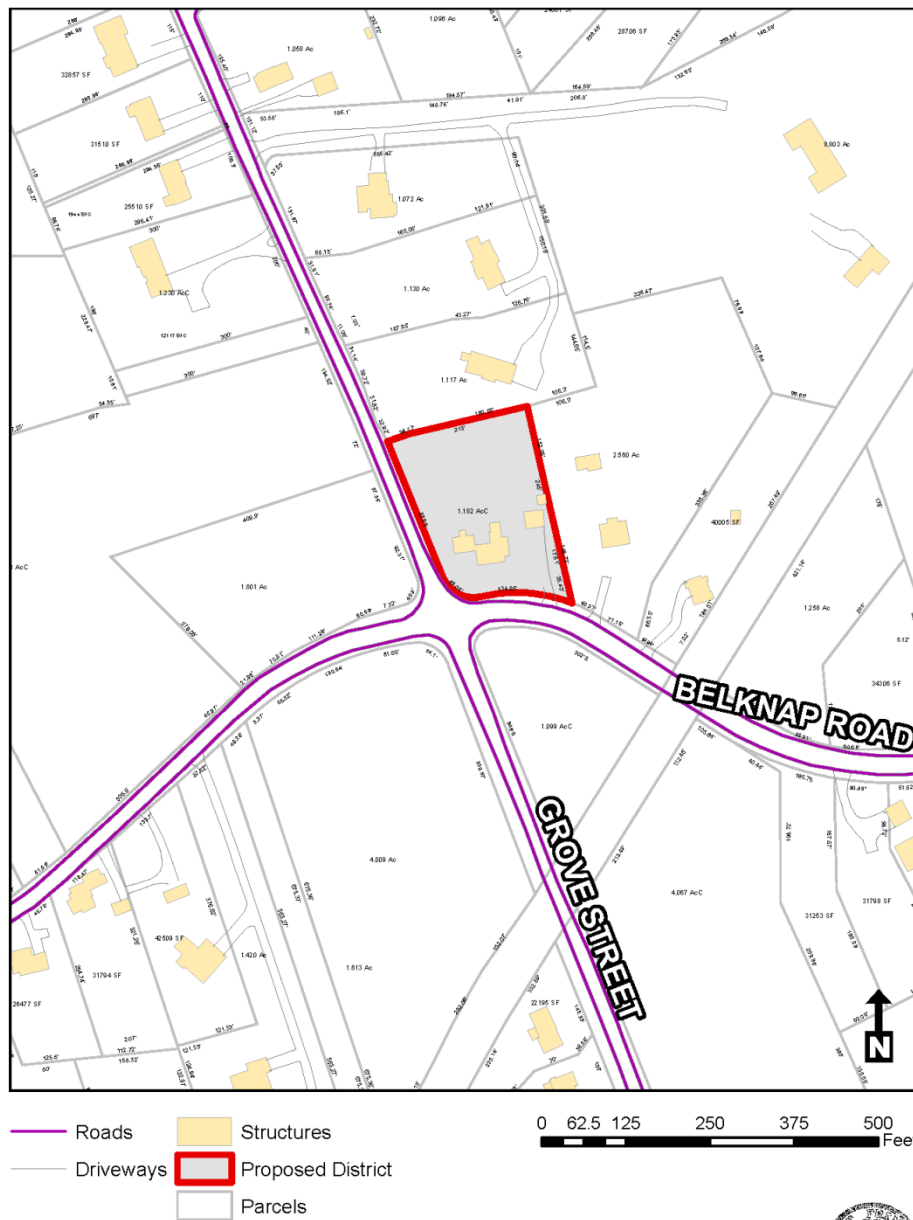


The Pike-Haven-Foster House as documented by Arthur C. Haskell for the Historic American Buildings Survey, December 21, 1938

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Map of Proposed District

Proposed "Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District" 161 Belknap Road, Framingham, Mass.



Prepared by Town of Framingham
Community & Economic Development Division
June 2016



Property Index

Properties to be included in proposed Pike-Haven-Foster House Historic District:

Parcel ID	Street Address	Inventory Form*	Construction Date	Historic Name	Architectural Style
067-08-8729-000	161 Belknap Road	FRM.557	ca. 1697	Pike-Haven-Foster House	First Period/Georgian
067-08-8729-000	161 Belknap Road	FRM.963	1930	Pike-Haven Homestead Marker	NA

Total Properties – 1

***“Inventory Form” refers to the Massachusetts Historical Commission Form B inventory form completed for each resource. “FRM.” is the Framingham inventory prefix.*

Property Description

**161 Belknap Road
Pike-Haven-Foster House
Built ca. 1697**



161 Belknap Road includes part of the original house built by Jeremiah Pike shortly after he settled in Framingham in 1696. Jeremiah, who came from Reading, Massachusetts, was a spinning wheel maker and one of Framingham's first Selectmen. This house remained in the same family line until the death of Miss Annie Foster in 1948, passing by marriage from Moses Pike to Gideon Haven and from Moses Pike Haven to Henry G. Foster.

This house is one of the oldest houses still standing on its original site in Framingham. Affectionately known as "The Hive", this house has grown from a modest two-room house to its current size. The architectural history of the house and its many additions and renovations has been well researched and documented, first by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1938 and then in a 1954 edition of the Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

The original house was a two-room house that consisted of a large hall and entryway in the front half and a kitchen with hearth in the back. Features of the house included a sophisticated beam and joist construction. Over the course of a century, additions and renovations transformed the appearance of the small house into the two-and-one-half story gambrel roof

house seen today. The dwelling now features a three bay façade with simple center entrance and a large center chimney. Fenestration consists primarily of twelve-over-twelve double hung wood sash windows except for the left bay of the main façade, which has small rectangular diamond-paned casement windows on the first and second floors. The walls are covered in wood clapboards, with wood trim, and the roof is covered in asphalt shingles.

MHC Inventory Form #FRA.557. This description modifies information contained in Form B.

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Maps and Atlases

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Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Map of Framingham Centre*, 1889.

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Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County Vol 3: Framingham, Plate 001 Right*, 1908.